

REMARKS

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 28, 30, 33, and 35 contain allowable subject matter.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C §102/§103

The Office Action rejects claims 27, 32, 37, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over JP 9-174418 ('418). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 27 recites in part, "A wafer double-side polishing apparatus comprising: a carrier plate having wafer holding holes, a center of each wafer holding hole disposed along a first pitch circle having a first diameter; upper and lower turn tables...the upper turn table further comprising a plurality of load supporting points disposed along a second pitch circle having a second diameter equal to the first diameter, the load supporting points configured to receive and distribute applied force to the upper turn table."

As discussed in the specification, a device in accordance with claim 27 provides the following results that are unexpected over the prior art:

...it is possible to provide turn table deformation with improved responsiveness to changes in polishing conditions during wafer polishing, thus facilitating the turn table shape control. Thereby, there can be provided the apparatus that allows the turn table shape control by properly changing polishing conditions in accordance with changes in polishing ability and other factors of polishing pads over time during repeated polishing of a plurality of batches of wafers, and that is capable of polishing with controlling easily batch-by-batch wafer shape without deteriorating wafer shape.

See specification at page 9, line 8 to page 10, line 6.

Despite its asserted disclosures, '418 fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of claim 27. First, claim 27 requires upper and lower turn tables. Nowhere does '418 disclose upper and lower turn tables. Clearly, the upper surface plate 2 and lower surface plate 3 disclosed by '418 are

stationary; there is no description in the reference of these plates having the capability of turning and the figures do not suggest such a function.

Second, although the Office Action asserts that balancing devices 12, 13, and 14 lie on a circle having a diameter equal to that of a circle connecting the centers of the wafer holding holes of the carrier, and refers to pages 6–7 of the translated disclosure for a "discussion of the structure of the device," nowhere in the written description does the '418 reference teach or suggest such a feature, nor does it disclose any benefits associated with such a feature or provide any motivation to modify a device to have such a feature. Absent any such disclosures, it cannot be said that such a feature would have been obvious from what is depicted in the figures of '418.

Independent claim 32 has features similar to those recited in claim 27 and, thus, the arguments presented above are equally applicable to claim 32.

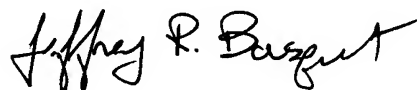
For at least the reasons presented above, '418 does not anticipate, and would not have rendered obvious, claims 27 and 32. Claims 37 and 39 depend from claim 32 and, thus, also are not anticipated by and would not have been rendered obvious by '418. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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